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SAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

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SAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

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I

THE general tendency in modern times is to look askance at all philosophy. Metaphysical enquiry has been likened to the search in a dark room for a black cat which is not there. Even such a great thinker as John Ruskin would appear to have an unkind word for the metaphysician – the thinker. He says : "I believe that metaphysicians and philosophers are, on the whole, the greatest troubles the world has got to deal with, and that .... busy metaphysicians are always entangling *good* and *active* people, and weaving cobwebs among the finest wheels of world business, and are as much as possible, by all prudent persons, to be brushed out of their way, like spiders, and the meshed weed that has got into the Cambridgeshire canals, and other such impediments to barges and business." [*Modern Painters*]. He regards him as "an affected thinker". But he has great regard for a "*true* thinker who has practical purpose in his thinking, and is sincere" and "becomes in some sort a *seer*". In our country too

1 Lectures delivered at the Banaras Hindu University in November 1952 under the Sri Arulnandi Sivacharya Swamigal Sivagnana Siddhiyar Lectureship Endowment.

it is the *seer* who is revered, and not the mere logician or the metaphysician, whose arrogance has often been snubbed by our saints and seers. Logic and metaphysics have their utility in so far as they help the seeker after truth to detect fallacies in his own thoughts and in the thoughts of others presented to him, and to have a coherent system of ideas concerning the perennial objects of enquiry. But the true end and aim of all thought and study has always been stated to be the actual *vision* of Reality—the ability to see the Supreme Being and remain in unison with It.

As another great thinker in the West has said: "To be a Philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates."

No sane and healthy man can in any century fail to think of the problems of life, both immediate and ultimate, and try to arrive at some more or less coherent system of thought relating to God, man and the universe, which will mould his life with reference to his chosen goal.

Viewed in this light, a study of philosophy, along with other necessary subjects, is essential to a true liberal education and culture. Therefore, the establishment of several chairs for Religion and Philosophy in the Banāras University and the creation of Endowments by the present enlightened Head of the Kāsi Mutt at Tiruppanandāl for the regular teaching of Saiva Siddhānta Philosophy and for the delivery every year of special lectures thereon are praiseworthy. This is one of the great systems of Indian Philosophy formulated by seers and saints on the basis of divine revelation and verification by their own realisation.

Modern students of history and philosophy may be presumed to have some idea of the antiquity of Saivism. The nature of the Indus Valley Civilization as it existed

over 5000 years ago has been described in a more or less detailed manner by historians in the light of the revelations made by the excavations at Mōhenjō Darō and Harappa. The main point which alone need be noted here is that, in those areas, the worship of Siva and the Mother Goddess was widely prevalent. In ancient Babylon, Sumeria, Egypt and even in distant America there are traces of Siva worship. We may note in this connection what *Sir John Marshall says:* " Among the many revelations that Mōhenjō Darō and Harappa have had in store for us, none perhaps is more remarkable than this discovery that Saivism has a history going back to the Chalcolithic Age or perhaps even further still, and it thus takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world. [Preface to " *Mōhenjō Darō and the Indus Civilisation* " Vol. I. Page vii].

As for literary evidence in the Rig Vēda, the earliest book extant, there are references to the Siva Linga worship. In the other three Vēdas there are ampler details given and greater claims made regarding Siva worship. In the Rāmaỹaṇa and the Mahābhārata there are clear references to the greatness, which may even be described as supremacy of Lord Siva. It is interesting to note that out of the eighteen major Purānas ten are Siva Purānas, and that in Bharatha Sāstra the mudra prescribed to denote Lord Mahādēva is the Namaskāra Mudra. In Tamil works also the earliest collection of poems going back to the early B. C's and coming down to the early centuries of the Christian Era give primacy to Siva in their hierarchy of gods. In some of these works which happen to mention the temples in certain cities, the temple of Lord Siva is mentioned first. Rev. *W. F. Gowdie* writes : "This system possesses the merits of a great antiquity. In the religious world the Saiva system is heir to all that is most ancient in South India".[1]

1. "Christian College Magazine" Vol. XX—9. Quoted by J. M. Nallaswami Pillai.

Even at present Saivism is one of the best living forms of Hinduism in India. Here is an inspiring vision for the Hindu eye: Far away among the lofty Himālayas is Mount Kailās–the seat of Lord Siva. Coming slowly down from that great height we have the shrines of Amarnāth and Khēdārnath on the West, and Pasupathināth in the East. Down in the plains, we have the famous temples of Lord Viswanāth in the East and Sōmnāth in the West. Further down in the South, we have Gokarnanath in the West, and Sabahnath and Ramanath in the East. From Kashmir to Cape Comorin is the land of Mahadeva. At the northern extremity Lord Siva has His seat, and faces South. At the southern extre mity His Consort is performing tapas, facing North. Thus the Universal Father and Mother of all are watching over us as it were. And it is most interesting also to note that all Hindus have for ages been having, as one of their religious ambitions, the performance of a Kāsi - Rāmēswara Yātra. The religious and cultural unity of the Bharata Desa has thus been formed and maintained intact for thousands of years.

Saivism as a religon has had to formulate a full-fledged philosophy in clear terms when it was attacked by the Buddhist and Jaina missionaries, and when the Brahma Sūtrās and its great commentaries appeared. Accordingly, from its own past literature the Vēdas, the Sivagamas and the Tirumurais it has developed a clear-cut system known as Saiva Siddhānta. '*Saiva*' means 'connected with Siva', and '*Siddhānta*' means 'conclusion'. But the term 'Siddhānta' in this school of thought is understood to mean the 'conclusion of conclusions' (of other systems of thought) and denotes by itself the Saiva Siddhānta system. The Saiva Siddhānta system is not one standing exclusively, all by itself. It does not denounce other systems as wholly

false and claim a sole monopoly of all knowledge and wisdom for itself. In fact, it studies with respect all religions and philosophies and sees their merits and defects, finds that all of them have their place in human thought and progress, and takes delight in seeing them all as forming a progressive series, like steps in a ladder. Saiva Siddhānta includes and accepts all these systems as having some truth at their core, and transcends them in the sense of eliminating their shortcomings and presenting a mature system. In fact, it is a system of systems—a federation of religions and philosophies. It claims to be the conclusion of conclusions. This is well expressed in a verse in *Sivagnāna Siddhiyār* which has been translated thus :

" Religions and postulates and text books are various, and conflict one with the other. It is asked which is the true religion, which the true postulate, and which the true book. That is the true religion, postulate and book, which, not conflicting with this or that, comprises reasonably everything within its folds. Hence all these are comprised by the Vēdas and Saivāgamas. And these two latter are imbedded under the sacred Foot of Hara "[1]

Saiva Siddhānta recognises perception, inference, and scripture as the three means at the disposal of the enquiring soul which, by its power of thinking (ātma chit sakti) studies things and comes to know their nature.[2] Here '*perception*' is used in a very comprehensive sense. It includes perception

1. J. M. Nallaswami Pillai's translation *Sivagnana Siddhiyar*-Page 229

2. The author of Sivagnana Siddhiyar devotes a separate chapter to the pramanas, and discusses the question of the number of pramanas—whether they are 6 or 8-and concludes that all of them can be reduced to the 3 specified above.

(1) by means of external senses, (2) by means of internal senses, (3) by feelings of pleasure and pain, and (4) by means of Yōga or seership. Thus the authority for Saiva Siddhānta is not solely the scriptures, but direct experience and reasoning as well. In other words, it claims that its system stands the test of reason also, and is not content with blind belief. St. *Umāpati Sivācharyā* in his preface to one of his works on Siddhānta, declares his rational stand thus :

"Whatever is old does not *ipso facto* become good; nor will any book written today become bad because it is new. The wise ones who evalute Truth will not reject a precious gem simply because it happens to be covered with dust, but will appreciate its worth. The mediocres will content themselves by recognising in the new book the beauties of the old ones. Those who are incapable of judging the merits and demerits of a book after careful study will praise it, or condemn it according as it is praised or condemned by a large number of scholars. They have no opinions of their own".[1]

Thus what is contrary to reason cannot claim validity through revelation, though it is admitted that ultimate Truth and its realisation transcend the limits of ordinary human thought and speech. *Logic* has its place in the enquiry of the seeker after Truth. It helps him to detect fallacies in his own thought and in the thoughts of others who may confront him with different philosophies, and to have a clear conception of Truth on which he may then meditate.

As for the scriptual authorities for Saivism, we may note that they are the four Vēdas and the twenty eight Sivāgamas in Sanskrit, and the Twelve Tirumurais and the

1. *Sivaprakāsam*

Fourteen Siddhānta Sāstras in Tamil. There is no antagonism between the two sets of scriptures; nor is there any antogonism between the Vēdas and the Sivāgamas. While all Hindus accept the authority of the Vēdas, only the Saivites accept the authority of the Sivāgamas as well. St. Tirumūlar has described the relation between the two thus: "The Vēdas and the Āgamas are true revelations from the same Supreme Lord. Understand that the Vēdas are general and meant for men of all grades of spiritual evolution,[1] whereas the Sivāgamas are special and are meant only for the advanced souls. Those who read these words of the Lord say that the conclusions reached by each are different. But to the great ones, the conclusions are the same".[2] In his Bhāshya on the Brahma Sūtras, Srikanta also states that he sees no difference between the Vēdas and the Sivāgamas with their three main divisions into Tantra, Mantra and Upadesa.[3] Hence, Saiva Siddhānta is sometimes spoken of as "Vēdāgamōkta Saiva Siddhāntam". St. Umapathi speaks of Saiva Siddhānta as the essence of Vēdanta. And St. Kumaragurupara, who is the founder of the Saiva mutt at Kāsi, likens the Vēda to a tree growing up from the field of pranava. He speaks of the followers the various schools of the Vedic religion as those who are satisfied with the leaves, tendrils, buds, flowers or fruits of the tree, and describes the Saiva Siddhāntins as those who have tasted the honeyed nectar of the juice of the fully ripe fruit (Vēdanta *i e.*, the Upanishads)—the topmost region of the tree. Hence Saiva Siddhānta is known also as "Vaidika Saivam".

1. Hence also the Vedas admit of different interpretations of their mantras. The Āgamas are quite clear and definite in their statements.

2. *Tirumantram* (VIII-28).

3. Srikanta's Bhashya on the *Brahma Sutra* (II-38)

Of the Fourteen Siddhānta Sāstras in Tamil, *Sivagnāna-Bōdham* by St. Meikanta Dēva, *Sivagnāna Siddhiyār* by his disciple Arulnandi Sivācharya, and *Sivaprakāsam* by St. Umāpathi Sivācharya are the best for purposes of getting a clear and systematic exposition of Saiva Siddhānta. Of these, *Sivagnāna Bōdham* is noted for its brevity and logic. It is in the form of twelve sūtras accompanied by their splittings into divisional sentences, and stanzas containing illustrative examples for the sections into which the Sūtras are divided. *Rev. Dr. J. H. Piet* writes about this treatise thus: " This book contains forty lines of Tamil poetry, and is without doubt one of the most closely reasoned religious philosophies found anywhere in the world."[1] Besides these there are great many works on Saiva religion and philosophy, both in Tamil and in Sanskrit.

Sivagnāna Siddhiyār is a unique philosophical work in verse. It consists of two parts called *Para Pakṣha* and *Supaksha*. Part I, in 296 stanzas, states and refutes the philosophies of the Lōkāyatas (materialists), the Buddhists, the Jains, the Pūrva Mimāmsakas, the Māyāvādins, the Nirūsvara Sānkhyas, and two other Vaidic schools, making a total of 14 systems. This part serves as an introduction to Part II, the Supaksha, where, in 328 verses, the philosophy of Saiva Siddhānta is stated positively in great detail. While doing so, the objections which the other schools of thought may possibly raise against Saiva Siddhānta are all stated and answered. There are six commentaries for this part. These were written between the 16th and 19th centuries by six commentators.[2] Four of these are also authors of

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1. A Logical Presentation of the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy (p. 11)

2 These are (1) Marai Gnana Sambandar who wrote *Para Mata Timira Bhanu* etc.. (2) Sivagra Yogi of Choladesa who wrote 12 original books, a *Kuru Tika* with 12,000 Sloka Udharanas for

several original works in Sanskrit and in Tamil. The Supāksha portion follows closely the order of topies adopted in the twelve Sūtras of the Tamil Sivagnāna Bōdham.

The *principles of Saiva Siddhānta are expounded in the Sivagnāna Bōdham by arranging its themes in the following manner*: It consists of two main parts—the general and the special. The first six sūtras form the general part (chapter). These deal first with proofs of the existence of Pati (God), pāsa (world), and pasu (soul), and then with the attributes of pasu, pāsa, and pati. The next six sūtras constitute the special part or chapter. These deal first with the sādhanas (methods and practices) for realisation, and with the benefits of such realisation. Under these two comprehensive heads, the special characteristics of the soul, the appearance of God as Guru before the ripened soul, the methods of obtaining purification of the soul (ātma suddhi), the removal of pāsa, the realisation of pati and the state of the jivan mukta are all considered. Sivagnāna Siddhiyār, which was designed to elaborate and explain the *Sivagnāna Bōdham*, follows the same order. It shall now be our endeavour to deal more or less in the same order with the main principles of Saiva Siddhānta.

First the reality of the three entities—God, soul and the universe—is stressed. These three are known as the "Tripadārtas", and their respective names are pati (God), pasu (soul), and pāsa (that which binds the soul). There are certain schools of thought which affirm the reality of

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Sivagnana Bodham, and a commentary in the manipravalam style on Sivagnana Siddhiyar, (3) Gnanaprakasar of Jaffna who wrote works in Sanskrit two of which are *Siva Yoga Saram* and *Siva Sannadhi Mahatmya Sangraham*, (4) Sivagnana Yogi who wrote the *Dravida Maha Bhashyam on Sivagnana Bodham*, *Kanchi Puranam* in Tamil. Nos. 1, 2, and 3 belong to the 16th century, and No. 4 to the 18th. The other two commentators are (5) Niramba Alagiya Desikar and (6) Subramanya Desikar. No. (5) belongs to the 15th century.

Pati alone, and look upon pasu and pāsa as mere illusions, like the appearance of the serpent in the rope, and of silver in the shell. Some have held that consciousness is only the result of a combination of the five elements (bhūtas) in the body, and that there is no separate entity like the soul. There have been others who have held severally that the body, the five senses, the life-breath (prāna vāyu), the mind and the inner organs (antakaranas) are the soul. Others have held that the world and the soul are the only existents, and not God. Saiva Siddhānta stresses the reality of the existence of all the three padārtas—God, souls, and the world and all else that bind the souls. This is known as Tripadārta Nischaya. It may be noted that the term pāsa is sometimes used to denote only ānava mala—the primary principle of darkness which binds the soul, and sometimes to denote also karma mala (the law of cause and effect), and māya mala which is the primordial substance out of which the material bodies evolve.

The arguments for the existence of God are as follows: The seen world which is perceived as he, she, and it is subject to the threefold changes of appearance in form, sustenance and disappearance. It must, therefore, have a Maker or Producer of these changes. He is God. At the back of this argument lies a postulate—the doctrine of *sat kārya vāda.*[1] It means that only from an existing cause—remote or otherwise—can an effect come into existence. It means also that nothing that exists can ever be destroyed, and that out of nothing no thing can come, but only nothing. These are the refutations of Buddha and Jaina views on the matter. Another important point to note in the argument is the principle that whatever thing has *avayavas* (component parts) is

1. Sat - Existence. Karya - Effect or product. Vada - Doctrine.

subject to change, and can be cognised as an object, and that the entity which does not have avayavas cannot undergo change.

Since māya (the primordial matter) out of which the world evolves is unconscious, it cannot by itself evolve into a world with laws governing its evolution. Nor can finite man evolve either the world or his own body out of matter by his own knowledge or power, as he is dependent even for his imperfect knowledge on his body and mind which he cannot create. Therefore, a Supreme Being who does not undergo changes Himself, like the world, even at the dissolution of the Universe is required for all evolutions from māya. He alone is the Pure Being—the Beginning of all. This unchanging Being cannot be cognised as an object among objects. He is an entity of non-relational knowledge. He is the Unchanging Real, whereas the world is a changing real.[1]

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1. This is akin to the cosmological argument stated and refuted in European Philosophy. It was advanced in some form or other by thinkers like Anslem, Thomas Aquinas, Locke, Hume and Leibnitz. But it has been smashed by Kant. His criticism is first that we cannot validly conclude from the idea of the world or cosmos experienced by us the existence of a necessary Being. Our thinking that such a Being must exist is no proof that it actually exists. Further this argument infers from the accidental or contingent the existence of a cause, and this has no meaning outside the world of our experience. Kant proceeds then to criticise the assumptions underlying this argument, as known to him from the writings of earlier philosophers of the West. There is also the attack on the idea of a First Cause. But all distinction between cause and effect, in fact, all thought will cease, if we demand a cause *ad infinitum*.

There is the teleological argument—the argument from design or purpose—advanced by those engaged in a religious search for truth. This is respected by Kant. But the moral argument makes the strongest appeal to him as proof for the existence of a Pure Being. If the objective validity of the Moral Law is questioned or denied, the argument cannot proceed further.

The value of these three lines of argument consists in their cumulative strength. A. E. Taylor says; "We cannot prove the existence of God. These arguments can make His existence extremely probable"[1]. We may admit that certain truths of very great practical importance are wholly undemonstrable. As Dean Inge says, "there are some questions which we cannot answer, and must leave alone"[2].

The Saiva Siddhāntin also says that the Supreme Being is beyond the ken of logic and metaphysics—beyond the reach of human thought and speech. The real ground on which he bases his assumption of the existence of God is personal verification of that existence by any one who takes the necessary pains to tread the inner path which is always open to the earnest seeker of Ultimate Reality. It is most remarkable that there is in this land an unbroken chain of seers-of those who have realised God and remained in a state of union with Him, even while staying in the human body. There are clear testimonies furnished by the Saiva Samaya Āchāryas and a number of other saints—too numerous to mention—to their personal realisation of the Supreme. That these claims are not mere fantasies is supported by the facts of their lives and by the existence of similar mystics in other lands. *Tirumantram* by Tirumūlar, *Olivil Odukkkam* by Kannudaya Vallalār, *Siva-*

1. *Does God Exist ?*
2. "*Theism in Philosophy*"

bhōgasāram by Guru Gnāna Sambandar[1], Hymns of Tāyumānar, and *Tiruvarutpa* by St. Rāmalingaswāmi may be cited as remarkable specimens of the records in Tamil of such spiritual experiences. These and similar other records of seers have to be made available through proper translations and notes to fellow-seekers in other lands than ours. The only real proof then for the existence of God is self-experience and the testimony of the gnānis—men of spiritual illumination and realisation of the Supreme.

So, according to Saiva Siddhānta, there are three ultimate realities which are eternal—Pati, pasu and pāsa. Though these are equal in so far as this mere co-existence through eternity is concerned, they are not equal in other respects: Pati is supreme and has infinitely higher status, qualities and powers. He permeates, dominates and controls the pasu and the pāsa He is the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of all the worlds, and is the Master of all orders of souls.

II

We shall now try to get a fuller account of God according to Saiva Siddhānta. In His transcendental aspect, " He is neither a rūpi (one with form), nor an arūpi (formless one). He is neither chit (sentient), nor achit (insentient). He does not create or sustain, or perform other functions. He is neither a yōgi nor a bhōgi. Though he dwells in everything and pervades all, He remains unaffected by them and retains His own nature "[2]. The author of *Sivaprakāsam* sets forth Pati lakshana (nature of God) thus: " The object of all the Vēdas, the Sivāgāmas and the manifold arts and sciences (or other works based on the Vēdas and the Āgamas) is to expound the different

1. The founder of the Saiva Mutt at Dharmapuram (Tanjore District).
2. *Sivagnana Siddhiyar*: Sutra I-verse 90

natures of Pati, pasu and pasa. Of these, Pati is the highest. It is neither rūpi nor arūpi. It has no finite attribute or mark. It remains ever free from mala (impurity). It is one and eternal. It awakens consciousness in countless souls. It is motionless and indivisible into parts. It has ānanda (bliss) for its form. It remains beyond the reach of the perverted, and is the goal of the devout. It is the smallest of the small, and the biggest of the big. Men of spiritual realisation call it Sivam "[1].

Here we may take note of the mistaken, but widely prevalent, notion that Siva is one of the Trimurthis—Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. In the Sanskrit and the Tamil Vēdas it is clearly stated that Lord Siva is not the Rudra or Siva of the Hindu Trinity, but one above them all—the Fourth, "Chathurtham", as the Upanishad would call Him. The Rudra of the Trinity is Guna Rudra, as distinguished from Turiya Rudra who is Lord Siva. It is clearly stated in some of the Tēvāram and Tiruvāchagam hymns that there are numerous Brahmas, Vishnus and Rudras who are holding the offices respectively of creators, preservers and destroyers of the particular worlds placed in their charge by the Supreme Being, Lord Siva—the Chathurta Entity. These office-bearers retire in due course after their love of power ceases, and they long for union with the Supreme. They derive their power from Lord Siva who dwells in them and induces them to act. Of the three, Rudra—the god of destruction—is nearest to Lord Siva. This is due conceivably to the fact that his function is ever to dissolve worlds and bodies, and he is in a special degree saturated with the knowledge of the impermanence of things material, and is more attached than

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1. *Sivaprakasam*—Verse 14,

others to the Pure, Changeless Lord of Bliss—Siva. On account of this, Rudra or the Hara of the Trinity is loosely identified with the Supreme Lord—Siva.[1]

Incidentally, another point regarding the relation between the Trimurthis and the Supreme Being may be clarified in the light of Saiva Siddhānta. Both in the Aryan and the Tamil Vedas it is often stated that it is the One Supreme Being who appears or functions as Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. The Puranas, however, appear to claim superiority for one of the three over the remaining two. Stories are not wanting to tell us that two of the three worshipped the third. Religious scholars advise us not to attach too much importance to such exaggerations which were meant only to create a special love in the heart of the devotee for one or the other of the Trimurtis. This confusion of views is got over by the Saiva Siddhāntin by a conception of inter-relation of the Trimūrtis and the Supreme Siva, which is not widely known. This may be stated here: The Supreme Being in Its transcendental (swarūpa) aspect is neither a rúpi (one with form), nor

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i. *Manicka Vacaga* asks of Lord Siva " Even the Trimurtis know Thee not. Who else can know Thee " ? *(Tiruvacagam*-Tiruppalli Eluchi). In another hymn he says: "He is Maha Deva—the Deva of the devas, He is the true warrior, is the Ananda-Rupi and the source of all, whom the Trimurtis themselves cannot know. He is the resplendent light who cannot be seen by any but the bakthas (lovers of god) ".

St. Sambanda speaks of "The three-eyed Lord whom the Trimurthis-who are the foremost among the devas worship as the One who is birthless " *(Tiru Araiani Nallur Tevaram*—Hymn : 3), St. *Appar* speaks of the death of " 100 crores of Brahmas, 6 crores of Vishnus, and of Indras as numerous as the sands of the Ganges", and of the Deathless Supreme Being, Isa.

an arūpi (one without form, nor a rūpa–rūpi (one with and without form). But in its relation to souls and matter, it assumes nine variations, pervades them, and acts through them. These are (1) Siva, (2) Sakti, (3) Nāda, (4) Bindu, (5) Sadāsiva, (6) Maheswara, (7) Rudra, (8) Vishnu, and (9) Brahma. The first four are formless. The fifth (i. e. Sadāsivam) is of form and without form as symbolished in the Sivalinga; and the last four have definite forms. The Trimūrthis noted above are emanations from the Supreme Siva Himself, and are known as Kāranēswaras and they reign in the regions of the Suddha Vidya Tattva. These are to be distinguished from souls who, by virtue of their tapas and punya, have risen to the posts of creators, protectors and destroyers-one set for each of the andās in the sthūla material plane. These are known *Kāryēswaras*, and their jurisdiction is con fined to the respective worlds in which they exercise their functions. The Kāranēswaras aforesaid, however, exercise their special jurisdic-tions over the whole Universe with its millions of worlds[1] The countless Brahmas, Vishnus and Rudras at the Kāryeswara level are given the names and emblems of their three respective Lords at the Kāraneswara level, that is, their names, forms, emblems etc. follow the patterns of their respective Masters.

This conception may help to reconcile the two different views regarding the relation between Siva and Vishnu. One is that both are inseperable from each other, and that one dwells in the heart of the other. This is illustrated by Tamil proverb which means that Hari and Siva are one, and that nothing but dust and clay will fall into the mouths of those who do not know this truth. Many authoritative texts could be quoted in support of this inseparability of the two. On the other hand, there are

1. *Vide*: Sloka 42—Siva Tatva Vivēkam.

found some stories of not a very edifying character about Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. These can be reconciled, if we accept the above notion that the inseparability of Siva and Vishnu and their honourable mention have a reference to the relation between the Supreme Sivam and His own form of Käranēswara Vishnu, and that stories told of the egotism, desire, anger etc. of the Trimurtis relate to the Karyeswara murtis who are but souls occupying posts of power and are serving in their limited spheres under divine control.

The Supreme Being as It is in Itself is known as *Sivam* or Brahmam. Viewed in its relation to souls and the world—pasu and pasa-it is known as *Pati* (or *Sivan*). As Pati He is impelled by His own attribute of Grace (Sakti) or Karuna to embark on His Panchakrityas—the five fold activities of creation, preservation, involution (destruction), concealment and revelation. To do this He takes suitable forms i, e. in the rūpa, rūpa-arūpa and arūpa states. But these forms are not taken from out of māya or matter in its primordial (sükshma) state which furnishes material for bodies and souls. It is His own Sakti that furnishes these Forms to Him. His Sakti is conceived of as Gnāna and Grace which are among the pure attributes of the Supreme—attributes beyond the fold of the three gunas experienced by embodied souls viz. satva, rajas and tamas. Modern investigations also confirm that thoughts too have forms.

His Sakti as It is in Itself as gnāna is *Para-Sakti*. When it turns towards the souls, it is called *Ādi-Sakti* or Tirōdhāna Sakti. When the desire arises in the Lord's heart to help souls, this Sakti is called *Icha Sakti*. Then when the Lord notices the fruits of Karma which souls have to experience, His Sakti is called *Gnāna Sakti*. When He

wills to provide the means and the environments for the enjoyment by souls of the fruits of their Karma, His Sakti is known as *Kriyā Sakti.* Thus His one Sakti assumes five different names. The relation betwen Sivam and Sakti is compared to that between the sun and its rays, the bell and its sound, and the flower and its fragrance. That is, they are inseparable, and stand in the relation of substance and attribute. This Śakti is represented by the gracious female form of Uma or Sivakāmi. She takes a form which is appropriate to the one which He takes for various purposes. To sum up, God's Knowledge, Grace and Power are known as His Sakti.

Because of His inherent infinite compassion, He performs the five-fold action (Panchakritya) as stated already to redeem souls from the bonds of mala—the principle of darkness—which holds them in its grip. Of these five actions, Srishti (creation) is the first. It is meant to make the bonds of pāsa fit for dissolution in due time, by creating the necessary bodies, organs and environments required for each soul. The second activity is *Stiti.* It is meant to protect or preserve for a time the created things, so as to enable the souls to enjoy the fruits of their action, and thus get rid of them. *Samhāra* is the third activity which consists in the dissolution of bodies and worlds, in order to give rest to the wearied souls, and help them to get rid of the fatigue of their births and deaths. The fourth act is *Tirōbhava* which means concealment of the Lord from the gaze of the soul until it steadily enjoys the fuits of karma, and at the same time makes sufficient progress in spiritual knowledge and longing for union with the Lord, rejecting the pāsa which has been holding it so far in bondage. The last act is known as *Anugraha*—bestowal of ineffable bliss on the aspirant soul after it has become fully qualified to feel as one with the Lord and enjoy His Ānanda.

Here we may notice the factors involved in creation. For a thing without name or form to be evolved into one with name and form, three agencies or causes are required. In the classical example of the potter, we see that clay, the wheel and the rod, and the potter himself are required to make a pot from the shapeless clay. The clay is known as the material cause (mudal kāranam). The danda (rod) and the chakra (wheel) of the potter form the instrumental cause (thunai kāranam), and the potter himself is the efficient cause (nimitha kāranam). The nimitha kārana should be an intelligent being if the desired effect is to be produced by uniting the remaining two kāranas (causes). Now, for the creation of the world, māya is the material cause; the Lord's own Sakti or will or gnāna—and nothing external to Him—is the instrumental cause; and the Lord Himself is the efficient cause. Thus creation takes place. It may be noted also that this creative activity and other activities take place by His mere sankalpa (will)—by His mere presence. He remains unaffected by them, just like the sun which remains unaffected by the different changes which take place simultaneously in his presence in different kinds of flowers etc.

We shall now proceed to note the Siddhāntic conception of the nature of pasu (soul). This is conveniently summarised in one verse in Sivaprakāsam, which has been translated thus : "The seers of truth say that souls are countless, eternal, and sunk in spiritual darkness. By the grace of God, they take up bodies suited to work out their twofold (good and evil) karmic tendencies, and are born as lower and higher beings. In the course of experiencing the endless fruits of their karma, they commit acts of merit and sin, and have births and deaths. When the season arrives for the dissolution of the dark bond affecting the soul, the light

of Grace in the inmost soul dawns, and darkness is dispelled. Then the good freed souls reach the Feet of Providence"[1]. The soul is known as 'pasu' because it is found bound by pasa—the principle of darkness or ignorance. *Sivagnāna Siddhiyār* states the nature of the soul thus :

"It is formless (arūpa) and all-pervasive (vibhu); but unlike that of achit or matter, its vyāpaka consists in becoming one with the thing it dwells in for the time being (body or God). Its eternal intelligence and power is eternally concealed by the pāsa (bondage) of anāva mala, and is hence called pasu".[2]

Two *important features of pasu* can be noticed. One is that it never stands alone, all by itself; it is always found in association with some other thing, either with the world or with God. The other feature is that the soul assumes the nature of that with which it stands associated. It does not, however, get itself transformed into the thing which it contacts. It has been compared to the crystal which takes on the colour of the object with which it comes in contact, while retaining its own nature. On account of this characteristic of the soul it is called *sadasat*. *Sat* is the eternal and never-changing Reality. *Asat* is a real which undergoes change in its condition. Such is *pāsa*. Pasu (soul) is capable of knowing both *sat* and *asat*.

1. Translation of *Sivaprakasam* by K. Subramanya Pillai—Published by the Dharmapuram Mutt (p. 19).

2. Translation of *Siddhiyār*: Sutra IV. 2. 20. J. M. N. Pillai's *Sivagnana Siddhiyar* (P. 206-7).

God and soul belong to one category, in so far as both are chit (intelligent beings), and have iccha (emotion), jnana (intellect), and kriya (will) saktis. But they differ in three respects : (1) Whereas God ever remains pure and untained by malas, the soul is so tainted. (2) Whereas God undergoes no change in His condition, attributes and powers, the soul is, from the beginning, covered by mala (principle of ignorance), and passes through various conditions. (3) Whereas God is ever all-knowing and omniscient, the soul, though capable of knowing, can know only with God's help. The nature of the soul is intelligence, though it stands in need of God to come into play. Hence the soul is known as stūla chit, whereas God is sūkshma chit. Sivam (God) is Sat, Chit, and Ānanda.

There are three orders of souls. The vignāna kalars belong to the first order. They are tainted by only one mala, namely ānava mala. The pralayākalars belong to the second order. They are covered by two malas, namely ānava and karma. To the third order belong the sakalars who are tainted by all the three malas, namely ānava, karma and māya. It is to the third and last order that most men and all the ordinary dēvas in other worlds belong. The human soul is enveloped in five sheaths or kōsas as they are called. They are (i) anna maya kōsa, (ii) prānamaya kōsa, (iii) manōmaya kōsa, (iv) vignānamaya kōsa, and (v) ānandamaya kōsa. All these are evolved out of māya.

Souls pass through three stages before they are finally emancipated from the clutches of pāsa. The original and first stage in which they are found is called the *kēvala avasta* (avasta = state). While in this state, the soul is fully enveloped in the darkness of the principle of ignorance i.e. ānava mala. The powers of intellect, emotion and will which are inherent in the soul are all kept down and remain

unmanifest. The soul lies inactive as though it is inert. In the next stage known as the *sakala avasta*, God provides souls with suitable bodies and environments, and goads them on to activities of an increasingly fruiful character. We men are in this stage. The last and the highest stage is called the *suddha avasta.* Only after passing through the mineral, vegetable, animal and sub-human kingdoms, the soul reaches the human kingdom. Here it takes several births to wear off gradually the tainting grip of ānava; and at long last the great questions about the whence and and whither of man are seriously asked and correct answers sought. Divine Grace continues to give necessary assistance, all unseen by the soul, till the final step is reached; and through Divine Grace again the bonds of ānava, karma and māya are snapped once for all, and the soul attains freedom, purity and bliss.

Having studied the attributes of Pati and pasu, we may consider those of *pāsa.* These are usually taken to be three in number. They are ānava, karma and māya. *Ānava mala* is the primary mala which, through eternity, has remained with the soul, as though it is naturally so connected. The other two malas begin to come and join the primary mala later on. Hence, ānava mala has been called sahaja (natural), and the other two ā*kantuka* (those which joined later). This ānava mala is one, but has innumerable agencies through which it works in innumerable souls It is capable of hiding everything from the soul—both itself and everything else. Just as verdigris is ever present in copper, this mala is ever found in conjunction with the soul's conciousness, and hides all its inherent powers of knowing, feeling and willing. It is eternal. It stands like bran in rice. Since all through eternity it stands connected with aṇu (i.e. soul), it is called ānava. But it is not an attribute of the soul, nor is it a product of māya. Just as rice remains purer

when bran is removed, so will the freed soul shine better after ānava mala is removed. It is not the mere absence of knowledge, but a positive principle of darkness whose nature is to hide, though it is jata (unconscious). When souls get into the sakala (embodied) state, the ānava mala permeates all the bodily and mental organs, and generates through them qualities like (i) passion and lust, and the feeling that there is nothing else than the objects of passion which could give greater happiness, (ii) intense sorrow when the object of this passion moves away, (iii) covetousness in spite of awareness of its undesirability, (iv) starving and suffering when material desires are not fulfilled, (v) developing likes and dislikes for fellow human beings, thinking that these have brought the souls happiness or misery, and (vi) pride and self-satisfaction at the sight of wealth and family. The power of ānava is gradually weakened in individual souls as they are led on to higher stages of spiritual advancement, and finally it ceases to affect the soul which has attained mukthi i. e. at-one-ment with the Supreme.

Māya is unintelligent, primordial matter which, at first, is without name or form. It is also eternal like Pati and pasu. It is the stuff out of which worlds are created, as also bodies, minds, and environments It affects all souls through its various powers which pervade all its evolutes. It binds the sakalas—souls of the third order—very closely, and provides them with infinite varieties of bodies, instruments and environments. It clings to souls so long as the primary mala i. e. ānava clings to them. According to its state of fineness or grossness it is divided into three grades. In its subtlest stage it is known as *Suddha Māya* (pure-matter). From it God evolves five *tatwas* (reals, evolutes) called Nāda Tatwa, Bindhu Tatwa,

Sādhākya Tatwa, Iswara Tatwa and Suddha Vidya Tatwa. These five are called *Suddha Vidya Tatwas.* The Supreme Lord acts directly in this Suddha Māya, and assumes His Forms. Hence these tatwas are known also as *Siva Tatwas.*

In the second stage, this māya is usually called *asuddha māya.* From it evolve seven tatwas known as *vidya tatwas.* Time, causation and agencies for evolving mental organs are among these five. The aforesaid suddha tatwas energise this asuddha māya and produce the vidya tatwas which are for this reason spoken of, at times, as Suddha Tatwas.

Prakriti māya is the name given to māya in its grossest stage. Out of this, twenty four tatwas known as *Ātma Tatwas* are evolved. These include the five elements, the sense organs, the sensations, the mental instruments, and three guṇas (satwa, rajas and tamas).

The tatwas also provide worlds of different orders ; and in these worlds live beings of different grades. And there are several dēvas (celestial beings) who function in them under Divine control. At the time of samhāra (involution), disembodied souls have their rest in māya. Sivam, the Supreme Being, stands above all these thirty six tatwas, though It pervades them, and energises them through Its Sakthi. The highest salvation for souls means the transcending of all the worlds and experiences pertaining to these thirty six tatwas.

Māya is like the husk which covers the rice-grain, and is removable. The rice becomes pure when the husk is removed. So does the soul become pure when māya is left behind.

Āṇava mala is like darkness which always hides things. Whereas physical darkness reveals itself while concealing other objects, āṇava-darkness conceals itself also from soul's view. Māya serves to afford light, though partial, and thus differs from āṇava.

Karma mala is the third of the malas to be noticed. It provides cause for the varieties in bodies which are given to souls, and also in experiences of pain and pleasure to them, and takes them through cycles of births and deaths. It is also co-existent with the eternal souls with which it remains in contact, and which it induces to act through body, mind and speech, and thus accumulate puṇya and pāpa. At the time of samhāra this karma mala also rests inactive in māya. It is divided into the three well-known branches —prārabda, āgamya and sanchita karmas.

This mala is like the sprout in the paddy, and is removable. It ceases to affect the souls which, through jnāna, attain mukti.

We have so far considered the nature and attributes of Pati, pasu and pāsa, and the relation between pasu and pāsa. We shall now notice briefly the relationship between pati and pasu (God and soul). This is indicated in the opening verse of Sūtra II of Siddhiyār, which can be translated thus :

"He is one with the souls and different from them ; He is one-and-different as well. He is the Sakti which shines in souls as Light Transcendant. He is the Lord of all (Pati) who, through His fivefold activity, guides innumerable souls in consonance with each one's karma and His own will. He is in inseparable relation with them, but remains unaffected by their nature and actions. He stands self-luminous and spotless, and is moniprésent". His

relation to souls can be likened to that of the letter A to the other letters ; and it is a direct relation. His relation with the world is through, and for, the soul. God is one and different from the souls, as is the soul in relation to its body or organs. Saiva Siddhānta interprets the famous Upanishadic term *advaita* as meaning *ananya*. It is a non-dual relationship between two things which are inseparably connected, like fire in wood, ghee in milk, juice in fruit, and oil in gingelly Sivagnāna Munivar (author of the *Drāvida Mahā Bhāshya*) compares this advaita relation of inseparability to that between music and tune, fire and iron, water and salt, air and space, life and body, water and shadow, sun and crystal, sunlight and lamplight, sunlight and eyesight etc. Thus the advaita relation is not one similar to that between gold and the jewels made out of it, nor the one between darkness and light. It means neither one nor two, nor the negation of either [1].

In one of the Tēvarām Hymns by St. Sambanda also we find this relation stated beautifully. It is found in the decad sung in the temple at Tiruvīlimilalai.[2] It can be freely translated as follows : "The abode of Him who is one as the Beginning and End of All, who is two as woman and man, who is three as three gunas (satva, rajas and tamas), who is four as the eternal four Vēdas, who is five as the five elements, who is six as the six tastes, who is seven as the seven musical notes and who is eight as the eight directions, but one who is at the same time different from all these and (yet) their *indweller and mover is* in Tiruvīlimilalai"[2]. God is all, but all is not God. He is all, and not all. He is immanent in everything, but still transcends them all.

1. This is the description given by the author of Siddhiyār itself, in another work of his called *Irupa Irupadu*.

2. This temple is in the Tanjore District.

St. Meikandar has clearly distinguished the term '*Ēkam*' from '*Advaitam*' and has given the above interpretation to 'Advaitam'[1]. This view of Advaitam is known as "Suddha Advaitam", to distinguish it from *Kēvala Advaitam* or *Ēkatma Vādam*. This view refutes a number of other views which are discussed at length in the Sivagnāna Siddhiyar and the Drāvida Maha Bhāshya on Sivagnāna Bōdham.[2] Thus it may be noted that Saiva Siddhanta is different from monism, dualism, and qualified monism (Visishtadwaitam).

III

So far we have considered the reality of God, souls and the world, their attributes and their relation to one another. We shall now take up the question of the goal of human existence, the means of reaching it, and the nature of life in the state of spiritual freedom. Souls which have risen up to the human level have, broadly speaking, reached a stage distinctively higher than those in the sub-human kingdom. But even among human beings all have not risen to the same level of achievement and refinement of intellect, emotion and will. In spite of some fundamental common traits, there are great variations in capacity, temperament, and action. But after man reaches a certain level of

1. Hence St. Meikandar has been called "Advaita Meikandan". St. Thayumanava—one of the greatest seers and philosophers of the 17th century—also pays his tribute to St. Meikandar as one who has discovered and presented "Suddha Advaita" which remained beyond the vision of many thinkers.

2. Advaitam is different from Aikyam, Samavayam, Saiyogam and Anirvachaniyam. J. M. Nallaswami Pillai points out that Manilal Dvivedi has stated in his "Monism or Advaitism" that Advaita means only *Ananya* and not *Eka*, *or Abheda*, *or Abhinna* (P. 164—Sivagnana Siddhiyar).

thought and culture, he begins seriously to enquire about the whence and the whither of himself and of the world, and about the means of attaining freedom from the imperfections of human life and of becoming one with the Supreme Being. He sees that the whole creation is moving towards one far-off Divine event. He realises that all religions are paths leading to this goal, and finds that some men have reached the end of their journey, while others are still treading their paths slowly, crossing one mile-stone after another. Several births are required before one can reach the final goal. He has first to practise several disciplines to build up a good and strong character. He has to achieve purity in body, and in thought, word and deed. He has to learn to refrain from evil, and to try to do good to others.

Of the eight steps in the *Ashtānga Yōga* ending in samādhi (state of remaining in union with God) the first two are iyama and niyama. Non-injury, truthfulness, non-coveteousness, humility, impartiality, hospitality, purity, refraining from drink and lust, and the winning of the approbation of good men are listed under iyama. Under niyama, purity, compassion, moderation in food, endurance, straightforwardness, honesty, firmness, acceptance and rejection according to law, abstaining from lust, theft and injury are put in. Next, tapa, japa, santōsha, āsthikya, dāna, vrata, Siddhānta vichāra (study of ultimate problems of life), performance of daily hōmas and Siva pooja, and faith in scriptural practices are prescribed. (Vide Tantra III in Tirumantram by St Tirumūlar). It is only after these two steps are crossed can one enter upon yōga. *Sivagnāna Siddhiyār* points out that God is Supreme Law, and that Love is Law. Good conduct, love, compassion, āchāra, courtesy, friendliness, good nature, tapas including sense-control and observance of austerities, charity, respect

for others, reverence to the deserving great, truthfulness, manly rejection of all temptations, humility, sense of discrimination and worship of elders are mentioned as the general and basic virtues of the spiritual aspirant, whether he is a theist or not. These are the ordinances of the Lord for the purification and upliftment of souls to a high spiritual state.

But, for making further progress from the above basic level of virtues, one has to cultivate love of God, and worship Him in all sincerity and humility. Such worship is acceptable to God. To the question "What God is to be worshipped", the answer is "the God of your choice, one whom you love", The worship offered to any God is ultimately the worship of the one Supreme Lord. Without this love and devotion to God, no amount of penance will take the worshipper to the highest goal. God is the nearest to us, and should be felt as the dearest to us as well. Profound gratitude for all His mercies shown to us through aeons, all unasked, will melt the the worshipper's heart. And the realisation that He is Love, that He is our Eternal Father and Mother, and that the highest quality of love is to become merged in the person loved will spur all healthy minds to quicken their pace in their march on the path of Bhakti. Such union with the Supreme will also mean freedom from all imperfections and conferment of eternal bliss.

When that yearning for a vision of God—for communion and union with Him-matures, the Lord appears in a suitable form in or before the aspirant soul, and gives it spiritual initiation. The nature of this initiation varies according to the order to which the aspiring soul belongs. Mention has already been made of the three orders of souls, namely, the *vijnānakalars*, *pralayākalars* and *sakalars*. To the souls of the first order, the All-knowing Lord who is the

indweller in all gives the initiation from within themselves, by intuition. To those belonging to the pralayākala group, He appears in His well-known divine form with four hands, three eyes and blue throat, and initiates them as a Guru present in front of the disciple. He adopts yet another method in initiating qualified aspirants of the sakala group. Ordinarily He induces a jnāni (a perfected soul) still in the human body to appear before the aspirant and give him dīksha (initiation). In special cases, He himself appears as a guru in human form, and gives the initiation, as He did for St. Mānicka Vācaka, the author of Tiruvācakam. The will of the Lord manifested through His Kriya Sakti confers this benefit on the advanced aspirant.

The object of *Dīksha* is first to put down the force of *mala* and free the soul from its grip, and immediately thereafter to confer on the disciple the vision and bliss of jnāna. Minute details of several kinds of dīksha for the sakala souls are given in Siddhānta works. It will be sufficient here to indicate the nature and aim of just a few of the varieties of this dīksha for the sakala souls. There are three grades in one category of dīksha namely (1) *samaya dīksha* (2) *visēsha dīksha* and (3) *nirvāna dīksha.*

In *samaya dīksha* the āchārya performs hōma with the object of initiating the entrant into religious life and making him fit for observing its ācharās and disciplines calculated to improve the purity of body, mind and soul—of thought, word and deed, and introduce him to the initial step of concentration on, and love for, God. In *visēsha dīksha* which is the next higher initiation, the āchārya takes the disciple mentally through a certain form of divine sakthi, and makes him qualified to do Siva pooja himself, to study the Sivāgamas with understanding, and to embark on yōga mārga. In the still higher form of dīksha

known as *nirvāna dīksha* the āchārya who has already God-vision and is ever in touch with His Holy feet, wills that all the six means of acquiring karma for the soul are resolved, one into the other, in a certain order, until the last is absorbed in the tirōdhana sakthi of Siva. When this is done, the thoughts, words and deeds of the disciple become spotless and pure, and continue as such, and his progress towards God-realisation is greatly quickened.

Apart from these recognised forms of dīksha accompanied by mantra, kriya, and bhāvana, there are less formal acts of initiation given to deserving sakala souls. This may be imparted by mere sight, touch, word, bhāvana, exposition of jnāna sāstras, or yōga. These may be adopted either as parts of the aforesaid formal dīkshas, or as independent dīkshas, all by themselves.

It is interesting to note that even for those who are incapable of observing the diciplines of samaya āchāra, like lads, old men, women, mental defectives, sick people, slaves etc., a form of dīksha known as Nirbīja dīksha has been prescribed with a view to help them to gradually learn to observe the necessary samayāchāras.

After initiation, one or another of the four main paths is followed according to the stage of spiritual development attained by the seeker after God. They are known as the *charya mārga*, the *kriya mārga*, the *yōga mārga* and the *jnāna mārga*. The charya mārga marks the beginning stage. Each of the three remaining mārgas constitutes a stage higher than the one next preceding it. These four mārgas are also known as dāsa mārga, satputra mārga, saha mārga and sanmārga, respectively. These are so called because the seekers treading these paths look upon God respectively as their master, their father, their friend and their lover.

In the *charya* (dāsa) mārga, the devotee renders bodily service in Siva's temple (cleaning its premises, gathering flowers and weaving them into garlands for the image of the Lord, lighting the lamps in the temple etc.) He delights in singing the Lord's praise, and serving those who wear the Saiva chinnas (marks)—the sacred ashes and the rudrāksha beads. Thus in this stage the worship is offered to an image of the Lord—a rūpa or stūla form—by means of service largely external. Such devotees attain, after death, Siva Sālōka i. e. life in the world or plane where Srikanta Paramēswara dwells.

In the *kriya* (satputra) mārga the devotee does loving pooja directly to Siva linga (Sūkshma form of God), with all the prescribed mantras and rites, sings Sivas's praise, does the daily agnikārya, and takes preparatory steps for yōga. Thus in this stage, the worship is both external and internal; and it is directed to the rūpa-arūpa form of God. The reward for such worship is Siva sāmīpya—the privilege of living in proximity to Srikanta, after leaving this world, and offering service to Him.

Those who have reached the *yōga* (saha) mārga begin with prānayāma, see the six ādhāras within themselves, and meditate on the dēvatas of those regions, and concentrate on the Inner Light Transcedent (the Nishkala or ati sūkshma form of God). They drink of the divine nectar welling up from within after concentrating on the highest ādhāra. After sheddding their mortal coil, they obtain the very form of Lord Siva. This state is known as Siva sārūpa mukthi. All these three states are known as *pada mukthis*—stages of a lower order in spiritual freedom and perfection.

The fourth and the final stage in spiritual evolution is reached in the jnāna mārga (sanmārga) with several stages,

The nature and form of worship pertaining to this stage are different from, and higher than, those noticed in the three earlier mārgas where the activity of worship is directed to a form, either without or within, through body and mind. It may be noted also that only for the soul that has crossed the first three stages that the Lord Himself appears in human form and gives *Jnāna Diksha*—initiation to the path of Jnāna. The path has to be pursued through its several stages before the final goal—the highest mukthi—can be attained. Only those who pursue this jnāna mārga practise samādhi, and succeed ultimately in remaining in union with the Supreme. The fruition of the samādhi is Siva Sāyujya. This is known as *para mukthi*—the highest mukthi-as distinguished from the three grades of *pada mukthi* noticed already. The relative merits of all the four have been indicated by a seer and saint by comparing charya, kriya, yōga and jnāna to the bud, the flower, the unripe fruit and the fully ripe one, respectively.[1] It may also be noted in passing that the lives ordained by Lord Siva for the four great Āchāryas of Saivism—viz. St. Tirunāvukkarasar, St. Tirugnāna Sambandar, St. Sundaramūrti and St. Mānicka Vācakar—who were all prefect Sivagnānis—illustrate in the main the dāsa mārga, the satputra mārga, the saha mārga and the sanmārga respectively.

Now a short account of the practice of Jnāna Mārga may be attempted. Most of those who come up to this stage study all the various siddhāntas concerning God, man and the universe and then begin to practise meditation within themselves on the Supreme Being in Its Swarūpa state, and see Sivam both within and without. But objective

1. St. Tayumanavar.—Paraparak kanni—157.

consciousness may continue to persist. This is an indication that ānava mala is still active, and that the vision of the Supreme cannot yet be had. To put down this assertion, or the invasion of the ancient ānava, a special practise or sādhana is prescribed. First, the Sri Panchākshara (*Na ma si va ya*) should be chanted in the proper manner, and in the proper spirit. The plain or surface meaning of this great Siva mantra is "Namaskar to Siva". He is our Lord and Master, and the soul is His servant who bows to the Master's will. His very form is composed of these five sacred letters which are enshrined right at the centre or hridaya of the Vēdas both in Sanskrit and in Tamil (Tēvāram). They are held in the highest esteem in all the Saiva Hymns and in all the Siddhānta Sāstras. Their japa is held to be capable of warding off the invasion of the *vāsana mala*—traces and tendencies of the prārabdha karma. Along with this japa, another practice should also be followed. This practice is known as *Sivōham Bhāvana*.

In this method, the soul indentifies itself in imagination with Siva, and repeats constantly "Aham Sivam" i.e. "I am Sivam". This will facilitate the obtaining of the vision of Sivam ultimately. So long as the I—consciousness of the soul and objective knowledge remain, vision of the Supreme cannot be had. But, when, by the strength of the Sivōham-bhāvana and dhyāna, that I-consciousness is subdued, the world will disappear, and only the jnāna swarūpa of Sivam will appear, shining in all Its glory. In order to make sure that the soul does not get slack in its meditation and lose sight of this vision, Panchākshara japa should be practised after getting the necessary initiation from a jnānachārya who has himself attained a state of undisturbed vision of Sivagnāna. This should be supplemented by Antaryāga puja in which Siva is worshipped in one's own heart-lotus, navel, and the spot between the eye brows—i.e.

where the penial gland is situated. The vision of Sivam which is had in the Sivohāmbhāvāna state is also partial, but indispensable as a step to the higher stage. The soul should strive to give up all conciousness of itself and remain completely merged in Sivam. This jnāna is known as Pati jnāna—Jnāna imparted by Pati out of His Grace, and it is only through this God-given insight that one can have a vision of Reality. This supreme jnāna is to be distinguished from *pāsa jnāna* and *pasu jnāna* which are sometimes mistaken to be true or full jnāna. *Pāsa jnāna* is only knowledge derived from the scriptures, the various arts and sciences, and the world itself. *Pasu jnāna* is the awareness of the existence of the knowing soul apart from the worldly objects and the mind, and the feeling or pride that the soul itself is God or the equal of God. These types are imperfect varieties of jnāna. Pati-jnāna which alone is perfect jnāna is obtained by practising the sādhana which the guru has shown.

The question may be asked whether the continued possession of its human body may not prove to be a hindrance to a soul in the said state of merger in Sivam. If only such a soul leaves off all acts concerning its body, and clings only to Sivam, and if it realises that all the activities of all things and all sentient creatures around it are really the activities of God, it stands one with God. It will pass the danger of invasion by its body-consciousness and of attack of ānava mala. Its very body and its physical and mental apparatus will be transformed into body and instruments of God. When thus ānava becomes powerless to attack, māya and karma will also become incapable of disturbing the purified soul. The freed soul will have neither likes nor dislikes. Hence the past karma cannot touch the purified soul, but only its body. Nor can any karma

accumulate for the future. When in this manner the soul has got rid of the influence of ānava, karma, and māya, the vision of the Grace of God will dawn, followed by the vision of Sivam. In this vision, the soul sees the infinite compassion of the Lord, and the manner in which He has been helping the soul all through its stages of evolution—from its kēvala avasta right up to the suddha avasta—by ever remaining in union with it, by helping it to see and by seeing Himself as well, and by promoting activity calculated to wear out the bonds of pāsa. The realisation of this infinite compassion and love of the Supreme melts the heart of the soul freed from pāsa. Overwhelmed by a sense of gratitude it loves the Lord intensely. This may be called Siva nishta—reaching the Holy Feet of Siva. When a soul still inhabiting its human body reaches this stage, it is known as a Jīvan Muktha—one who has obtained mukti (freedom) while still in the body. Only such active and intense love born of immense gratitude for the Lord, will fructify in Infinite Bliss, Siva Bhōga—Sivānanda. Without such love for God, there can be no Ānanda. Love leads to Ānanda. The great spiritual seer St. Mānicka Vāchaka addresses the Lord in one hymn as "Oh Bliss! Oh my Love!"

Such jīvan mukthas merged in the love for, and bliss of, the Supreme Sivam see nothing but God in all things around them. They have no likes or dislikes. They are not mindful of social etiquette, nor of tāpas, nor of āsrami rules. They are beyond the control of their body and mind They have no caste or creed. They behave like children. and may act semetimes like mad men, on those possessed by spirits. They may be found singing and dancing in ecstacy. They stand fixed ni union with the Supreme, and nothing in the world can effectively drag them down. They are

freed finally from birth in this world. They will be enjoying the vision and bliss of the Supreme even when they are in the waking state. According to the Siddhānta conception of mukthi, salvation consists in becoming united to the feet of the Lord. The soul is entitled only to the full enjoyment of the Ānanda of the Supreme. But it does not become the equal of Siva, and cannot perform His *Pancha Krityas*. Its separate existence continues, though its nature is transformed. Pāsa also continues to exist, though its power to bind the released souls has become extinct. In a subtle sense, ānava even helps the muktha soul to enjoy the Divine Bliss.[1] Thus, in the Siddhānta conception of Mukti, all the three' padārtas continue to exist, though the nature and action of pasu and pāsa become different.[2]

The soul which has attained this mukti will remain immersed in the eight great auspicious attributes of the Supreme Being. It will be in the enjoyment of supreme bliss. The relation between Siva and jiva in the mukthi state has been compared to that between magnet and iron, fire and the iron piece put in it, water and the salt put in it, and the rasa kuliga and copper. The first of these analogies is meant to show that God undergoes no change Himself when the freed soul is in union with him. The second one is to show that God transmutes the mukta soul into His own swarupa. The third is meant to suggest that

1. Anava mala does this by screening off pasu and pasa from the view of the soul in mukthi, so that its bliss resulting from its union with Sivam may not be interrupted by cognising them.

2. This conception of Siddhanta mukthi differs from those of several other schools of thought (e. g.) Monism, Dualism, Visishadvaitam, Bheda vadam, Parinama vadam, Aikya vadam, Sivasama vadam, Pashana vadam and Isvara Avikara vadam, Lokayatam, Buddhism and Jainism.

God bestows His attributes on the freed soul. The last analogy suggests that God takes into Himself the muktha soul without making explicit His power to transform. The nature of the Bliss enjoyed by the *soul has been stated by many a mystic as being beyond all words. It has been suggested that* some vague idea can be gained by thinking of the difficulty of separating the taste of each individual component of a mixture of the juice of sugar-cane, honey, milk, fruit-juice, sugar candy, sugar etc.

Such is the grand picture of the life of the jivan mukthas. But, so long as they live in the physical body, they too are expected to continue to be on their guard against a possible attack, however feeble, by their old enemy—their vāsana mala. This is the possibility of the recrudescence of the spent up tendencies of prārabda karma, and of its attempt to slacken, if possible, the steadfastness of the jnāni's meditation on the Supreme. If, while the effect of his prarābda karma begins to appear, he becomes conscious of himself and develops likes and dislikes; things of the world will once again begin to present themselves before him ; and he will once again be exposed to invasion by māya which he has once transcended. Revival of this objective knowledge will bring about a renewal of an attack of ānava. These may cost him temporary loss of his sense of union with the Lord, and of his enjoyment of Siva Bhōga. But this is only a possibility, and that too perhaps may not exist for all jīvan mukthas, but only for some. And all of them will remain undisturbed in spiritual freedom and perfect bliss once their prārabda karma ends and they leave their body.

However, certain preventive steps are suggested in the Siddhānta Sāstras for avoiding all possibility of such invasions from vāsana mala. Since consciousness of the individual self is the source of this danger, the jivanmukthas

should once again plant themselves firmly in the experience of Siva jnāna, and thus wash out the touch of mala. They are enjoined firstly to avoid the company of low-minded persons, and ever be in the company of real devotees or jnānis of God and honour them as God Himself. Secondly they are enjoined to honour also Bhasma and Rudrāksha, which are the Saiva emblems worn by the devotees, as Lord Siva Himself. Thirdly they are to worship the Siva Linga, in the temples as Lord Siva Himself, and take delight in singing His praise and dancing in ecstacy. The great saints and ācharyas have practised all these and exhorted people to honour these.

Bhasma (sacred ashes), Rudrāksha, and Siva Linga are symbols pregnant with meaning. Bhasma or Vibhūti is prepared by burning dried cow-dung with appropriate Siva mantras. It may be remembered that the cow is also called '*pasu*' and the dung its '*mala*', and that the ashes are white. The bhasma dhārana is a symbol to remind human beings of the ultimate object of their life on earth-that they, the pasus, should burn away their three malas in the fire of Sivagnāna and attain purity (whiteness.) The tripundara suggests that the malas to be burnt away are three in number. The ashes suggest also the perishable nature of all things of the world. The Vēdas, both in Sanskrit and Tamil, greatly insist on the wearing of Bhasma.

The gist of the Upanishadic story of the Rudrāksha is that it was created out of the drops of tears shed by Lord Mahādēva on hearing from the Dēvas about the suffering and humiliation which had been inflicted on them by the asuras. ('Rudra—aksha' means Rudra's eyes-tears welling out from the eyes). The wearing of the Rudrāksha also is enjoined by the Vēdas. This is the symbol of the compassion which one should have at the sight of distress of others.

The Sivalinga is also an emblem of very great spiritual significance. It stands for light—jnana jyōthi. St. Tirumular states in one of his revelations thus : "The human heart is the sancta sanctorum (garba griha). The fleshy body is the temple. The mouth is the entrance with the gopuram thereon to the presence of the compassionate Lord. To the clear sighted sees, the jīva is the Siva Linga, and the five deceptive indriyas are the lamps burning in the shrine". Thus the installation of the Siva Linga in the sancta sanctorum suggests that the highest form of worship is to try to see Siva in jīva and worship Him in the Ātma Linga which is stated to be of the size of the thumb—Ankusta pramāna. The Supreme Being can be worshipped in His eight forms—His ashta mūrthas, namely the five elements, the sun, the moon and the jīvātma. But as the first seven are nonsentient objects, worship in the chitform-one's own self—is the highest form of worship. Hence the unique praise of the worship of Siva Linga in the greatest scriptures of our land.

The temple too is symbolical of the human body. The famous shrine of Lord Natarāja at Chidambaram has been definitely designed to represent a number of yōgic facts and experiences. So the aspirant for salvation is expected to know the innner meanings of all these symbols, undergo the prescribed disciplines, and perform the practices suggested by them in accordance with the yōga and mantra sāstras.

Hence the jīvan muktha is directed to wear Vibhuthi and Rudraksha, to worship Siva Linga and be in the company of jnānis. He is to regard all these as Siva Himself. It may also be noted that worship of Siva in His temples has been enjoined on the aspirants in all the four mārgas-charya, kriya, yōga, and jnāna. The worshipper in the first of these

stages looks upon the images of the Lord as the Lord Himself, and the Lord bestows His Grace upon such worshippers without any special manifestation. The worshipper in the kriya stage believes that Lord Siva who has no form has been invoked to stay in this Linga in a mantra—form. He will, therefore, try to see the Lord in His mantra—form when he offers worship to the Siva Linga. To him the Lord appears like the fire in fuel. The yōgi feels that Siva who occupies his whole heart as His Shrine accepts worship also in the Siva Linga in the temple. To him the Lord will appear in the form in which he desires to see Him. The jnāni feels that Lord Siva is everywhere and that, for the benefit of the souls, He accepts worship through this Siva Linga. The jnāni worships the Linga in all love. To him Siva always manifests Himself from the Linga and blesses him, like the cow which gives out its milk at the sight of its calf. These jnanis realise that the worship of the Lord offered in all the four stages is real and is acceptable to Him. And as jnānis have to be the natural gurus of the aspirants for spiritual bliss, they have themselves to set examples of worship in all the four mārgas. They who have risen to the highest stage can well afford to adopt also the forms suited to the earlier stages, in order to induce others to get on to the path of Freedom and Bliss. When the Siva jnānis thus perform worship, Lord Siva will act through them, and give appropriate initiations to aspirants.

One other characteristic which must be noted in the jnānis is their great compassion for the struggling mortals. In the closing verse of one of his philosophical works (Tiru Arul Payan), St. Umapati Sivāc̄harya states that the jīvanmuktas are incessantly tossed about in their flood of compassion at the sight of the suffering of men who are involved in worldly activities standing at the head of their

deceptive senses. And St. Sambandar asserts that Siva bhakthas would surely have Jīva Kārunya, and hints that those who have no compassion are asuras like Ravana.[1] All the great Saiva Samaya Āchāryas have exemplified in their daily lives their love for their fellowmen. Their ground for loving others and serving them is stated in the following command contained in a Saiva work called "*Saiva Samaya Neri*"—(The Path of Saiva Religion). "Be loving to all living beings, since Lord Siva is ever present in them as their In-dweller."

We have seen in the course of these lectures how the ancient seers and saints of our land have been reminding us of the ultimate goal of human existence—of a life of spiritual freedom and Divine Bliss, and have given us a philosophy and religion based on reason, revelation, and verification by our own experience. Their message has a special value in these days of growing secularism and life of confusion, conflict, worry, frustartion, fear and misery. The great experiment of democracy in a Republic can prove a blessing, only if it is clearly recognised that the true purpose of good government is to actively help the citizens in their march through the stages of Dharma, Artha and Kāma to the ultimate goal of Mōksha—life of spiritual freedom and bliss. All the moral virtues like honesty, purity, love and service have to be developed in the life of the nation, and *tyāga* as opposed to *bhōga* has to be upheld as the definitely superior ideal, and means to the attainment of the final goal of man's existence. We have seen how the jīvan mukthas—those who have no attachment even for their bodies—are impelled by their love for others to render active social service in an unselfish spirit. Those who have not yet risen to their level—they too have to practise this

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1. St. Sambandar's Tevaram sung in the Madurai Temple.

form of service to the best of their ability. It is not to be in a spirit of condescension or patronage, but in a spirit of service to the Lord Himself who dwells in the "Daridra Nārayans" as Sri Ramakrishna would call the poor.

Let me conclude this series with two requests made to the Supreme Being by St. Tāyumānavar :

In one hymn he cries out :

" Thou Supreme One ! vouchsafe to me Thy grace, so that I may for ever enshrine Thee in my heart, and worship Thee as a duty never to be forgotten". After thus praying for the grant of love for God, the saint proceeds in the very next hymn to pray for love of His creatures. He prays :

"Thou Supreme One ! bestow on me Thy Divine Grace to enable me to look upon all living beings as myself, and to love and feel for them ".

Love of God manifested in the love of all living beings is thus the quality which is practised and preached by our jnānis. May we also pray likewise to the Supreme One, in all sincerity ! May He bless us all and guide us aright !

Om Shānti ! Shānti !! Shānti !!!

SAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

We are living in an age of marvellous progress in the field of science, coupled with the amazing inability of civilised man to live with fellowmen in peace and amity. Selfishness, both individual and national, leads to greed and competition, and provokes antagonism leading to war. Confusion and frustration, worry and fear, want and misery, and increasing cruelty poison human life in millions of homes. While atomic science promises prospect of plenty, what we find now are only atomic bombs and other weapons in abundance. Among some of the intellectuals the heart has not developed *pari passu* with the head. Secularism and materialism spread all round. Wherefrom can the motive force come to change men's heart to remove the basic ignorance regarding the end and aim of life? As Bernard Shaw says, "Religion is the only real motive force in the world". And as H. G. Wells has observed, "Religion is the first and the last thing, and until man has found God, and been found by God, he begins at no beginning and he works to no end". Hence a correct understanding of religion and philosophy is essential for human progress and happiness.

We have to steer clear of the extremes of modern secularism and religious fanaticism, both of which are playing great havoc in human life. The people of our motherland have from time immemorial been devoting very great attention to the fundamental problems of life.

Prof. Max Muller says: "There existed in India a large common fund of philosophical thought which, like language, belonged to no one in particular, but was like

1. The substance of a lecture delivered by Sri S. Satchidanandam Pillai at the Allahabad University on the 11th November 1952.

the air breathed by every living being and thinking man. Thus only can it be explained that we find a number of ideas in all, or nearly all, the systems of Indian philosophy which all philosophers seem to take simply for granted, and which belong to no one school in particular". Several such schools of thought have arisen, and nearly all of them have a practical side which was considered even more important than the theoretical one. In other words, our systems of philosophy did not aim at mere systematisation of thought at the intellectual level, but also at practical realisation of the ends envisaged by them. There was a religious side to philosophy.

Saiva Siddhānta is one of the greatest of such philosophical systems. One of its special features is that it approaches all the other schools of thought with respect, and recognises the elements of truth in each of them, and their need for man in the various stages of spiritual evolution. It finds place for all of them in a comprehensive system, and is thus universal in its outlook on other religions. Saivism is also one of the most ancient religions of the world, if not the most ancient one, as Sir John Marshall states. The excavations in Mōhenjō Daro and Harappa and the culture of South India have clearly established that Siva and Sakthi worship was the most prevalent religion in India even before 5000 years. Its prevalence in other lands than ours, like ancient Babylon, Summeria, Egypt and even distant America is well known to students of ancient history. Mention is made of Siva Linga worship in the Rig Vēda which is the most ancient book now extant. Right in the heart of the Yajur Vēda is the Sri Panchākshara. That Saivsim is still a living religion in India is obvious to any one who travels from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin.

The religion of Lord Siva from whom Lord Vishnu is inseparable is Saivism, and it is the most widely prevalent

religion among the Hindus. The literature pertaining to this religion and its philosophy is found in several languages, but mainly in Sanskrit and Tamil. There is no question of race, colour, or language in religion. India is a sub-continent into which several streams of human migration flowed in the past. These have largely mixed with one another in the course of centuries of co-existence. As I bathed in the Triveni Sangam, I recollected how our great poet Rabīndranath had compared the mixing of the Ganges and the Jumna to the intermixture of the Āryan and the Dravidian races in India. "Beyond the Sangam, one cannot say which drop of water is from the Ganges, and which from the Jumna. At Banaras, the river is known only as the Ganges. The Sakthi remains merged in the Saktha. It is interesting also to note how in one of his poetical works in Tamil, Chēramān Perumāl Nāyanar[1], the last of the Chera emperors and one of the 63 canonised Saiva Saints—compares the Ardhanāriswara form of Siva to the junction of the Ganges and the Jumna, the bhasma-smeared Siva resembling the whitish waters of the Ganges, and the green colour of Uma resembling the greenish waters of the Jumna. The Hindus must then cease to think any longer of the Āryan or Non-Āryan, and must feel that they are all one.

It does not require any special acumen to see in what direction the world is moving. The vision of "One world" and of "Under Heaven, One Family" is no longer confined

1. This emperor who lived in the early quarter of the 9th century A. D. was the friend of St. Sundaramurti, one of the four Saiva Samaya Acharyas. The language of the Chera kingdom was Tamil even during his time. He had written three beautiful poetical works in Tamil, when he visited Chidambaram, Tiruvarur and Mount Kailas for worship. The comparison quoted above is found in verse 90 of his *Ponvannattu Antathi*, sung at Chidambaram.

to the poets and the jnānis. Millions of ordinary men and women have begun to feel this need, and are longing for the realisation of this vision in the daily life of humanity. There is but one God, by whatever name we may call Him, and all living beings are His children in various stages of growth and development. In all spheres of our activity we must be guided by this sense of unity and brotherhood.

The practice of Saivism, in its essentials, is not necessarily confined to any one country, race, or language. While the old lists of names of Saiva Saints relates only to India, it is clearly stated in an inspired poem of St. Sundara, which gives the names of the sixty three individual saints and nine groups of other saints, that Saiva saints may be found in other lands and other times than the ones noticed by the author. The roots of this system of thought are found in the earliest Upanishads and in some of the extant Tamil works of the Sangam and the Pre-sangam Age (e. g. Tirukkural and Tolkāppiyam). St. Tirumūlar's *Tirumantram*, and more particularly the Siva Āgamas, contain vast elaborations of the system.

The Saiva Vēdas in Tamil viz. Tēvāram and Tiruvāchakam which correspond to the Sanskrit Vēdas and the Upanishads, and are in the form of hymns, contain all the concepts of Siddhānta philosophy. These concepts appear again in the Tamil land in fuller philosophical form from the 12th century A. D. onwards to meet the situation created by the controversies raised by Buddhism and Jainism, and the appearance of Sri Sankara's famous Bhāshyam. They were expounded in fourteen works in Tamil. Of these, the first two are statements in verse of the spiritual experiences of their saintly authors. The third work *Sivagnāna Bōdham* by St. Meikanda Dēva is in the form of 12 sūtras in 40 lines. Each one is provided with

an analysis of its topics, and with verses containing elucidations for the respective sections. The next great work, *Sivagnāna Siddhiār*, is an expansion in verse of the themes in the Sivagnāna Bōdham. Its author is St. *Arulnanthi Sivācharya*, disciple of St. Meikanda Dēva. Only one more of the Fourteen Siddhanta Sastras need be mentioned: It is *Sivaprakāsam* by St. Umāpathi Sivāchārya[1], one of the *Dīkshithas* of Chidambaram. A learned and elaborate commentary on the Sivagnāna Bōdham has been written in Tamil by Sivagñana Yōgi. It is known as the Drāvida Māha Bhāshya. And six commentaries have been written on Sivagnāna Siddhiār. A very large number of philosophical and religious works on Saivism have appeared since.

A bare outline of the Saiva Siddhanta thought will now be attempted: The term "Saiva" means "relating to Siva"; and "Siddhānta" means literally "conclusion". But "Siddhanta" is often used to denote the Āgamānta, the conclusion of the Sivāgamas, and it is deemed to be the Siddhānta or conclusion of the examination of all the other Siddhāntas or conclusions. In other words, it is the conclusion of all conclusions or systems of thought. Since the Vēdas and the Sivāgamas are recognised as the basic scriptural authorities in Sanskrit, this system is known also as *Vaidika Saivam*.

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1. These three and St. Maraignana Sambanda are known as the Four Santana Acharyas of Saivism.

The sources of knowledge are reckoned as three, namely, pratyaksha, anumāna and āgama. Perception comprises not only the ordinary mental perception got through sensation, but also yogic perception. Anumāna is reasoning, and āgama is scriptural authority—primarily the Vēdas and the Sivāgamas and next the records left by Saiva saints and seers. After the days of the four Saiva Samaya Āchāryas and the Four Santāna Āchāryas, there appeared a great many philosophers and seers like, St. Tāyumānava, Gurugnāna Sambanda, Sivaprakāsa, Appaya Dīkshita, Haradatta Sivachārya and Ahōra Sivāchārya who have all left behind them religious and philosophical works in Tamil and Sanskrit. They are of immense value to to students of Saiva thought and culture.

One of the main points stressed by Saiva Siddhānta is *Tripadārta Nischaya*—the doctrine that the three entities God, soul, and the world in its causal state are eternal existents ; that the soul and the substance out of which the world is created are uncreated and co-existent with God Himself. These three eternal entities are known as Pati, pasu, and pāsa respectively. The existence of God is sought to be proved by the fact that since insentient matter cannot by itself take on the form of a world in cosmic order, and since imperfect souls with very limited knowledge and power cannot either create the world, or even provide themselves with bodies and internal and external instruments by their own effort, one who has the knowledge, wish, and power is required for creation, preservation and destruction or involution. Such a Being is God. He is the Lord of srishti, sthithi and samhāra. This reminds us of the cosmological and the teleological arguments discussed in western philosophy. These have been vehemently criticised by Kant. It is quite conceivable that any proposition or system of thought can be adversely

criticised, and confusion and defeat in controversy brought about by a logician or metaphysician sufficiently well trained in the art of controversy. There are various devices by which an adversary ean be cornered by unscrupulous controversialists. That art was not confined only to the sophists of ancient Greece. We had their prototypes in our country as well—men who would go about in search of others for verbal combats, men who would argue, not to discover truth, but only to defeat another by fair means or foul. Existence of God is not a matter for mere logical debate. Primarily it is a matter of faith, and ultimately a matter of direct personal verification. Surely there is some help to be derived from logic, when it is used properly by learned men who are earnest seekers after truth. Logic is useful also to a seer who has realised God and wishes to present in clear and cogent terms the Truths that he has realised. It is useful also to an earnest enquirer, in so far as it enables him to guard against confusion or fallacies in thought.

There is absolutely no doubt that there is a Supreme Being to whose existence and nature thousands have testified by actual experience. It is a Spirit which is so transcendental that it cannot be seen or contacted like a finite object of the world. It has no form, or name, or mark. It is one, all-pervading, and eternal. It is the indwelling and activating spirit or life in all. Its qualities are above satwa, rajas and tamas with which we are familiar. Only through long and severe spiritual discipline, one could develop the insight to see It both within and without. That eternal and Supreme Being as It is in Itself is called *Sivam* (the Blissful.) Due to Its own Divine Grace, It assumes forms out of Its own Sakthi (power), which may be of the rūpa, or arūpa, or rūpārūpā category, in order to redeem souls from their bonds of ignorance and evil. When It (the Sivam) thus

begins to feel and work for the soul, It is known as *Pati.* This Pati performs the five activities known as (1) srishti (creation), (2) stiti, (preservation) (3) samhāra, (destruction) (4) tirobhava, (obscuration) and (5) anugraha, (revelation.) He creates bodies and worlds out of the primordial substance called māya constituting the material cause. The instrument He uses in this activity is His own Sakti, which constitutes the instrumental cause. This Sakti is inseparable from Him, and manifests Itself as Ādi Sakti, Icha Sakti, Gnāna Sakti and Kriya Sakti. Siva and Sakti are related as the sun and its rays, or the flower and its fragrance. He is the efficient cause. By His mere will or sankalpa He does all the panchakrityas - five activities. He shines unaffected by them just like the sun which is not affected by the various changes taking place in his presence in different kinds of flowers. He who stands above the prākritic qualities of satwa, rajas and tamas is stated to have higher mangala gunas which are counted as eight, six or three. The three attributes are (i) eternal and unchanging existence, (ii) omniscience, and (iii) infinite bliss. He is Sat, Chit and Ānanda.

Lord Siva is not one of the Trimūrtis described in the purānas as Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. He is the Fourth or Chaturtam. He carries on the work of creation, preservation and destruction through those three mūrtis. It is even stated that there are several such groups of trimūrtis to carry on work in different andams or worlds, and that these are souls qualified for these posts—souls on whom the form of the Trimūrtis is bestowed when they take up work in their appointed worlds.

Souls (pasus) are countless, eternal, and sunk in spiritual darkness. Pati provides them with bodies and worlds suited to their needs, in order to release them

gradually from the clutches of the said darkness by taking them through several births according to His plan. He reveals Himself when they are completely purified.

Two characteristics of the soul specified in the Saiva Siddhānta are: (i) the incapacity of the soul to stand all by itself, unassociated with anything else, and (ii) the assumption of the nature of the thing with which it comes into contact, (e. g.) assumption of different colours by the crystal when objects of different colours come near it. Since the soul can conceivably stand united either to God who is *Sat*, or to pāsa which is *asat*, it is called *sat-asat*. Though the pasu is *chit*, i. e. an individual capable of knowing, it can know only when helped by God to do so, and its knowledge is only finite.

Souls pass through three states. In the first stage known as *kēvala avasta*, they are completely enveloped by pāsa, and their inherent intelligence and power are kept wholly suppressed and unmanifest. In this stage they are not provided with bodies and the environments in which to move. In the next stage known as *sakala avasta* they are provided with suitable bodies and worlds to live in. In the third and final stage called *suddha avasta* they are freed from the grip of pāsa which is the name given to añava, karma and māya. It is in the suddha avasta that the soul is freed once for all from all birth and death, and enjoys divine bliss-ananda-for ever.

There are three orders of souls according as they are bound by one, or two, or all the three malas. Those who are bound only by ānava are named *vijnanakalas*. Those who are bound both by ānava and karma are *pralayakalas*. And those who are fettered by ānava, karma and māya as well are *sakalas*. It is to this group that all living beings from amoeba to man and all the dēvas too belong.

As stated above, *Pāsa* denotes ānava, karma and māya. These are known also as the three malas or impurities. Of these the *ānava mala* is the primary mala or impurity. It is known also as *moola mala*—the primary one without which the remaining two cannot begin to operate. It is called also *sahaja mala*, since it has been with the soul and enveloping it in its darkness from eternity. It is like verdigris in copper, and bran in rice. Its essential nature is to hide from the soul all knowledge, including the knowledge of even the darkness which hides it. It generates in the soul bad qualities like ahankāra, mōha, covetousness, sorrow, and likes and dislikes.

Karma mala provides for experience of pleasure and pain according to law. Bodies furnished to the souls are determined with reference to this mala. It acts through body, mind, and speech, and facilitates the emergence of action, and the accumulation of good and bad deeds. It is divided into three categories: *prārabda karma*, *āgāmya karma* and *sancita karma*. The first is that portion of the total karma whose fruits of pain and pleasure are to be enjoyed in the present birth. The second is the karma which is newly acquired by attachment, or likes and dislikes, while reaping the fruits of one's prārabda karma. Sancita karma is the unspent balance of the total karma accumulated through all the previous births. Karma means primarily action. It means also the law of cause and effect applied to human activity through body, mind and speech. Action done with attachment produces a reaction. Non-attachment to action frees the soul from contact of the effect of that action. Thus karma does not mean eternal bondage to the law of cause and effect, and no fatalism need be accepted.

Māya is the primordial material substance from which the world evolves, and into which it returns. It is unintelligent,

It is without name or form at first. It is not an illusion, but an ever existing thing. In Siddhanta, māya is broadly divided into three grades according to the degree of its purity or grossness. That strata of māya which is the subtlest and the purest is known as *Suddha māya.* The next strata which is a little impure and gross is called either *misra māya* or *asuddha māya*, The third strata which is most impure and most gross is known as *prakriti māya.* Through His Sakti, Pati (God) causes several evolutes or tatwas to come up from each grade of māya. From suddha māya, five tatwas known as *sivā tatwas* are evolved. Nādam and bindu are the first two. From *misra māya* seven tatwas called *vidya tatwas* are evolved. And from *prakriti māya*, twenty-four tatwas known as *atma tatwas* are brought into existence. In all, there are 36 tatwas. The last of them is pritvi (earth). All the bodies, minds, and objects that we have in this world are evolved from this last grade of māya. The pralayākalas and the vijnānakalas live in the two higher and purer stratas of māya.

The object of the evolution of the tatwas from māya is to provide souls with appropriate bodies and worlds, so that these may be employed to fight and come out of the grip of ānava. Objects created out of māya provide light, though partial and imperfect. But ānava stands for keeping the souls in complete darkness. Lord Siva stands above all the 36 tatwas. He is both immanent and transcendent.

The relation of God to the soul is one of *adwaita.* Adwaita means neither one nor two, but the inseparable union of two in one. It is not mere non-difference; it is union in separateness. The entities so united are ever distinct, yet they are ever united. What Evelyn Underhill says may be noted here with interest ;

"The soul's union with Him is a love-union, a mutual inhabitation, that essentially dualistic relation which all mystical religions express, not a self-mergence which leaves no place for personality. This eternal distinction, the mysterious union-in-separateness of God and the soul is a necessary doctrine of all sane mysticism; for no scheme which fails to find a place for it can represent more than a fragment of that soul's intercourse with the spiritual world"[1]. Thus God is one, different and non-different at the same time in His relation to the soul. He helps the soul to see by seeing things Himself, although He is not affected thereby. He is like the sun which helps the human eye to see things. This view of Advaita relation is called in Saiva Siddhānta *suddha advaitam* to distinquish it from certain other interpretations of the Upanishadic term, *advaitam*.[2]

Thus standing within, the Lord pushes up the soul in its ascent of the spiritual ladder. First, a strong and noble character is to be built up. It features are comprised in the first two steps of the Aṣtanga yōga—the iyama and the niyama steps. The qualities to be achieved are non-injury, truthfulness, non-covetousness, humility, impartiality, hospitality, purity, compassion, moderation. endurance, straightforwardness etc. Then tapa, japa, santosha. āstikya, dāna. vrata, study of the jnāna sāstras and the performance of Sivapūja have all to develop, and all this is to ripen into a strong love for God in whatever form or name which the aspirant may choose.

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1. Preface by Evelyn Underhill to *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*. Quoted by Dr, V. A. Devasenapathy. 2. Kevala Advaitam and Visishta Advaitam.

Saiva Siddhantam is neither the Pluralism nor the Realism of Western philosophy.

Before reaching this stage, dīksha (initiation) from a qualified person will be found necessary. There are three grades of dīksha for the souls of sakala order to which we belong. These are called the *Samaya dīksha*, *visēsha dīksha* and *nirvana dīksha*. The aim of the first and preliminary dīksha is to initiate the entrant into religious life and make him fit to observe its discipline, and improve his purity. In the second grade of dīksha, the aspirant is taught to do Siva pūja himself with some understanding of its inner significance. The third form of dīksha is calculated to make him wholly pure, and to keep his mind constantly in touch with consciousness of the divine.

After the appropriate initiation is given, the aspirant soul enters upon one or other of the four mārgas known as (1) *the charya mārga*, (2) *the kriya mārga*, (3) *the yōga mārga*, and (4) *the jnāna mārga*. These are known also as (1) *the dāsa mārga*, (2) *the satputra mārga*, (3) *the saha mārga*, and (4) *the sanmārga*, since God is looked upon by the devotees treading these paths, as Master, Father, Friend and the Lover, respectively. In the charya mārga the devotee worships the Lord externally in some form which attracts him, and renders bodily service in the temple. In the kriya mārga, he begins to do pūja himself at home, besides worshipping in the temple. In the yōga mārga, the worship becomes internal and takes the form of concentration on certain divine forms, within his own body. In the last stage, jnāna mārga, the seeker after God sees Him everywhere. The seekers of the first three mārgas are rewarded with Sālōka, Sāmīpya and Sārūpa mukthis after their death. That is, they get the privileges respectively of living in the lōka of the God of their worship, enjoying life in proximity with Him, and getting His very form for themselves.

Higher than all these are the jnāna mārgā and its resulting bliss. The Lord either induces a perfect jnāni to initiate the deserving aspirant, or does so Himself, assuming a human form for the purpose. This takes place only after the aspirant learns to look alike upon all actions and experiences without any attachment to them, and as actions of the Lord Himself. That is the stage when his ānava mala begins to leave off its hold on him, and the Grace of God descends on him.

The senses and the mind will not help the seeker to see God ; they will only tend to screen and confuse. But he cannot afford to remain in total isolation from them ; for then he may run the risk of going back to his earlier kēvala state. Therefore, he should see them as false and misleading. Then he will reach the Holy feet of the Lord. If by former association, he feels like renewing his contact with the senses, he should intensely fix his thought on the Lord, and thus escape from their renewed contact and wholly reject them.

When the sādaka realises the fleeting nature of the world and rejects it, the Jnāna Svarūpa of Siva will become manifest to him, by His Grace. He will practise also with proper aids what is known as *Sivōham Bhāvavana*, so that he may rise above consciousness of the world. Still there is the possibility of an invasion of what is called *vāsana mala*—renewal of his awareness of, and his likes and dislikes for, objects of the world, due to his previous associations with them and to the tendencies formed thereby. In order to avoid thus slipping back into consciousness of the world, the sādhaka should meditate on the sacred *Panchākshara*, and also perform internal *archana* to the Lord conceived as being seated in the lotus of his heart, with the Panchākshara itself as His Form. In this manner *Ātma Suddhi* will be achieved. This will be followed first by

freedom from the hold of the three malas. This is achieved by the obliteration by the soul of its sense of separate existence even while having the vision of God, by standing in complete union with Him, and by seeing every action proceeding, either from him or from others, as verily His own. This attitude will secure freedom from ānava, karma and māya. Any action proceeding from a soul in this state will be accepted by the Lord as His own. Any attack on such a person by his old prārabdha karma will remain ineffective, as he has become a jnāni blessed with the vision of God, and his state of realisation of the Supreme can no longer be lost. Further, the very senses and the mind which had previously been controlling him and tossing him about will come under his control. Thus remaining secure from the mischief of the three malas, he will realise, as never before, the depth and magnitude of the upakāra (help) that God has been rendering to him, all unasked, by remaining in intimate advaita relation with him and activity purifying him all through his kēvala, sakala and suddha conditions. This realisation produces a feeling of overwhelming love and gratitude. This is the cause of true *bhakti*. Such a jnāni desires nothing but constant love for, and service to God. Such a soul enjoys infinite and ineffable bliss which cannot be described. This is salvation or mukti.

This mukti is of two categories—*para mukti* and *jīvan mukti*. It is called para mukti when the redeemed soul has cast off its body on the liquidation of its prārabdha karma. It is known as jīvan mukti, when the full-fledged jnāni in unperturbed union with God, enjoying all the Bliss that it brings, happens to be still inhabiting his human body. He will see nothing but God, both within and without, and he will remain immersed in His *mangula gunas*.

In his waking state the jīvan-mukta is likely to be disturbed by occasional recollections and recrudescence of his

previous knowledge, desire and action, like the darkness which looks out for the removal of light, so that it may regain its enveloping and darkening power of old. He is, therefore, enjoined to direct his thought to the removal of mala, his desire to the search for true jnānis and companionship with them, and his will or action to the worship of the Lord in Sivālayas. He is to see the manifestations of the deep devotion of the jnānis, and realise that they are Lord Siva Himself, and long to serve them. The Siva chinnās (marks) which they wear, and the Siva temples in in which they worship and serve are all to be looked upon as Siva Himself. These are prescribed as necessary safeguards and aids for ensuring steadiness in the jnāna—state for the jīvanmukta who has already had a clear vision of the Jnāna Svarūpa of the Lord.

The inner meaning of the Siva chinnās, the Siva temple and the Siva Linga may now be noticed. Marks and symbols form an essential part of practical religion. For example, let us notice briefly the meaning of wearing the two Siva chinnas (marks worn by the Saivites)—the sacred ashes and the rudrāksha beads. The bhasma dhārana (smearing of the sacred ashes) is a mark which reminds, or ought to remind, the wearer and the observer, of the ultimate aim of their life on earth. How? The ashes which he wears are got by burning the cowdung—the mala of the cow or pasu—in a fire; and they are smeared all over the body by the ascetics, and in tripundara (three lines) by others. These acts symbolise the burning up of the mala or impurity of the soul (pasu) in the fire of divine knowledge. The tripundara suggests that the impurities (malas) to be removed from the soul are three, namely, ānava mala, karma mala and māya mala. Whiteness is suggestive of purity and jnāna. Hence the goal suggested for human life is the removal of all impurities covering the soul and the attain-

ment of jnāna. Similarly, the rudrāsha beads suggest that their wearer should have compassion for those in sorrow and suffering, bearing in mind that the scriptural account of the rudrāksha tree is that it was created by the will of Lord Siva from the drops of the tears He shed on hearing from the dēvas the details of the suffering and shame inflicted on them by the asuras.

The Siva Linga, the squatting Nandi (Bull) facing the Linga, the Balipīta behind the Nandi, and the Flag staff usually found in all Siva temples are also symbols of great ideas. The Sivalinga stands for the flame-like jīvātma in the lotus of the human heart. There are eight forms in which Siva can be worshipped i.e. the five elements, the sun, the moon, and one's own soul. The highest of these forms is the jīvātma, since it alone is chit. And worshipping in one's own heart, and not in an external object, is of the highest order. The squatting Nandi represents the purified jīva which has discarded all sense of I and mine, and has willingly surrendered itself—body, mind, soul—to the Lord, and thus remains in union with the Supreme Being[1]. The Balipīta stands for the pāsa or bond ignorance and evil which binds all souls and which are sacrified and left behind by the soul which has attained jnāna. The flag staff at the top of which a flag with the figure of a bull is hoisted at the time of the annual Brahmōtsavam (great festival) suggests that the Lord lifts up the pasu (soul) from the earth to the highest state—Siva Lōka or jnāna. It suggests further that a worshipper should fix his mind only on the Lord when he enters the temple for worship, and stand unperturbed like the dvaja stambha.

1. Because of this surrender, the Bull does not stand erect, but lies down seeing only the Lord with whom it is in a state of at-onement.

The Siva temples also have much symbolic significance. There are two varieties known as '*Sarira prastāra* and *hridaya prastāra*. The former class of temples represent the various main parts of human body. The latter indicate some inner verities which dwell in the human heart in the form of words and certain subtle things. Here the symbolic nature of the great temple at Chidambaram which belongs to the second variety may be noted. Its walls—prakāras—represent the bodies encasing souls. The Kanaka Sabha where Siva as Lord Natarāja, dances represents the heart of the Virātpurusha. There is no direct entrance from the front to the sabha. There are but two side-entrances—one from the right and the other from the left. These two entrances represent the main artery and the vein of the human heart. There are five steps leading up to the Sabha where the glorious figure of Lord Natarāja stands. These steps represent the sacred *Panchāksharas*—*Na ma si va ya*, and are known as the Panchākshara steps. In the thin walls in front of the Sabha there are windows with 96 holes, representing the 96 tatwas through which the soul peeps, in its *sakala avasta*, and which it leaves behind when it enters the *suddha avasta* state.

There are in the Sabha clusters of pillars numbering 4, 6, 18 and 28. These stand for the Vēdas, Vēdāngas, Purānas and the Sivāgamas, respectively. In the ceiling there are 64 rafters representing the 64 kalas-arts and sciences. In the roof there are 21,600 golden tiles representing the total number of our daily svāsas (breaths), and 72,000 nails driven into these tiles to suggest the number of nādis in the human body. There are nine golden kalasas on the roof to represent the nine saktis through which the Lord acts. Within the Hall, there are five *pītams* to represent the Trimūrtis, Maheswara and Sadāsiva.

To the north of the inner shrine there is a thousand pillard mantapam, and there is also a tank called *Sivaganga*. The Mantapam with its 1000 pillars represents the *Sashasrāra* of the human brain —the thousand petalled lotus seen by the Yōgi in the region of his brain. And the Sivaganga or Amrita Pushkarani suggests the amrita or nectar-juice which exudes from the region of the *Vena cava* in the brain.

It may be noticed also that there is a vacant portion which is marked off from the major portion of Kanaka Sabha. That is known as *Chidambara Rahasya*. There is no image installed in it. It is meant to suggest the arūpa (formless) and atīta (transcendental) aspects of the Supreme. In the main portion of the Sabha there is a silver case with a crystal Siva Linga. It represents the *Rūpa-arūpa* form of the Lord. Right behind It, stand the superb figure of Lord Sri Natarāja, and the gracious form of His Consort, Sivakāmi, on His left. Thus are the *Atīta*, *Rūpārūpa*, and Rūpa Forms of the Supreme Being represented in the Kanaka Sabha.

Unless the Supreme One, out of His infinite Mercy, descends from His incomprehensible and unapproachable state to come within the reach of the earnest, but imperfect, mortals, there is no possibility of their ever becoming one with Him. "It is clear", says St. John of the Cross, "that God, in order to set a soul in movement, and raise it from one extreme—the abject condition of the creature—to the opposite extreme, that is, to the infinite height of the divine union, must act gradually, gently, and in accordance with the nature of the soul. Now the ordinary mode of knowledge proper to the soul requires the use of the forms and images of created things; for we can know and savour nothing without the stimulation of the senses. Hence God,

to raise the soul to supreme knowledge and do it with gentleness, must begin to touch her in her lowest extremity-that of the senses, in order to raise her gradually and in accordance with her proper nature to her other extremity—that spiritual wisdom which is independent of the senses. God works man's perfection according to man's nature. He begins with that which is lowest and most external and ends with that which is highest and most interior".

The jīvan-mukta who is a jnāni sees all this and sees far more in the Siva chinna, the Siva Ālaya and the Siva Linga than those who are treading the paths of charya, kriya, and yōga. The jnānis see in the Siva Linga, not any finite object, but only the Omnipresent Lord, and to them the Lord manifests Himself directly with love like that of a cow for its calf. Thus they too worship in the temple along with others in the three lower stages, though with a different attitude and result. Those who have passed on to higher stages can and do worship as in the lower stages. By offering worship in temples they induce others to congre[illegible]e in such holy places to do service and worship, and thus gain spiritual benefits.

Only one other feature of the life of jīvan-mukta will be noticed before closing this lecture: It is his great love for all forms of life—his *jīva kārunya.* He sees the Lord present in all of them, and, therefore, he loves them. He is moved deeply by the sight of his fellow-men distracted and tossed about by their deceitful senses, and is moved to do service to them, in some suitable form. St. Rāmalinga [2]

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1. Quoted by Evelyn Underhill in "The Golden Sequence"—PP. 32-33.

2. One of the most powerful living forces in Tamil Nad. He was born in 1823 and lived for 50 years. He has composed thousands of heartmelting songs widely read and enjoyed.

declares that *Karuna* (compassion) and Sivam are the highest objects to be achieved, and explains both most elaborately in his entrancing verses and his prose writings. He brushes aside all beliefs, āchāras and social arrangements which do not promote the realisation of these two supreme objectives. Also in an oft-repeated prayer of his, he puts karuna first, and prays to the Universal Father that he might be enabled to love all living beings.

Another seer states that there are only three things to be done by all men. These are (i) speaking nothing but *satya* (truth), (ii) doing *hita* (good) daily to living beings around them, and (iii) constantly thinking of *Sivam*. Thus he has given directions as to how we should use our speech, body and mind—our trikaranās. He adds that these three injunctions are those found in the Vēdas and the Āgamas revealed by God, and that these are acceptable to the followers of all religions and all persons. May the Lord who is both immanent and transcendant guide us and help us to lead such a pure life, and reach at, no distant time, the state of a jnāni who is dear to Him!

Ōm Shanti ! Shanti ! Shanti !

Errata.

Page.	Paragraph.	Line.	For	Read
3	1	15	Vol. I	[Vol. I
3	2	6	supremacy	supremacy,
4	2	5	literature	literature—
4	2	6	Tirumurais	Tirumurais—
8	2	6	Nirūsvara	Nirīsvara
9	3	3	pati	Pati
9	(footnote)	5	Bodham,	Bodham and
13	2	3	this	their
17	1	8	karyeswara	kāryēswara
25	5	last	monipresent	omnipresent
26	2	12	He	He is
32	(Page Title)	—	SVIVA	SAIVA
33	1	7	Diksha	Dịksha
36	2	4	āsrami	āsramic
36	2	7	on	or
36	2	9	ni	in
40	1	12	Ankusa	Ankushta
42	2	8	frustartion	frustration
49	1	8	Four	four
50	1	16	Truths	truths
60	2	14	bond ignorance	bond of ignorance
61	1	10	Siva	Siva,